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Weed Distribution

Indicator: Number of infested acres, both inventoried and estimated, of invasive plant species on BLM lands by state or, when available, by county. These invasive plant distribution estimates indicate the magnitude of the weed problem.

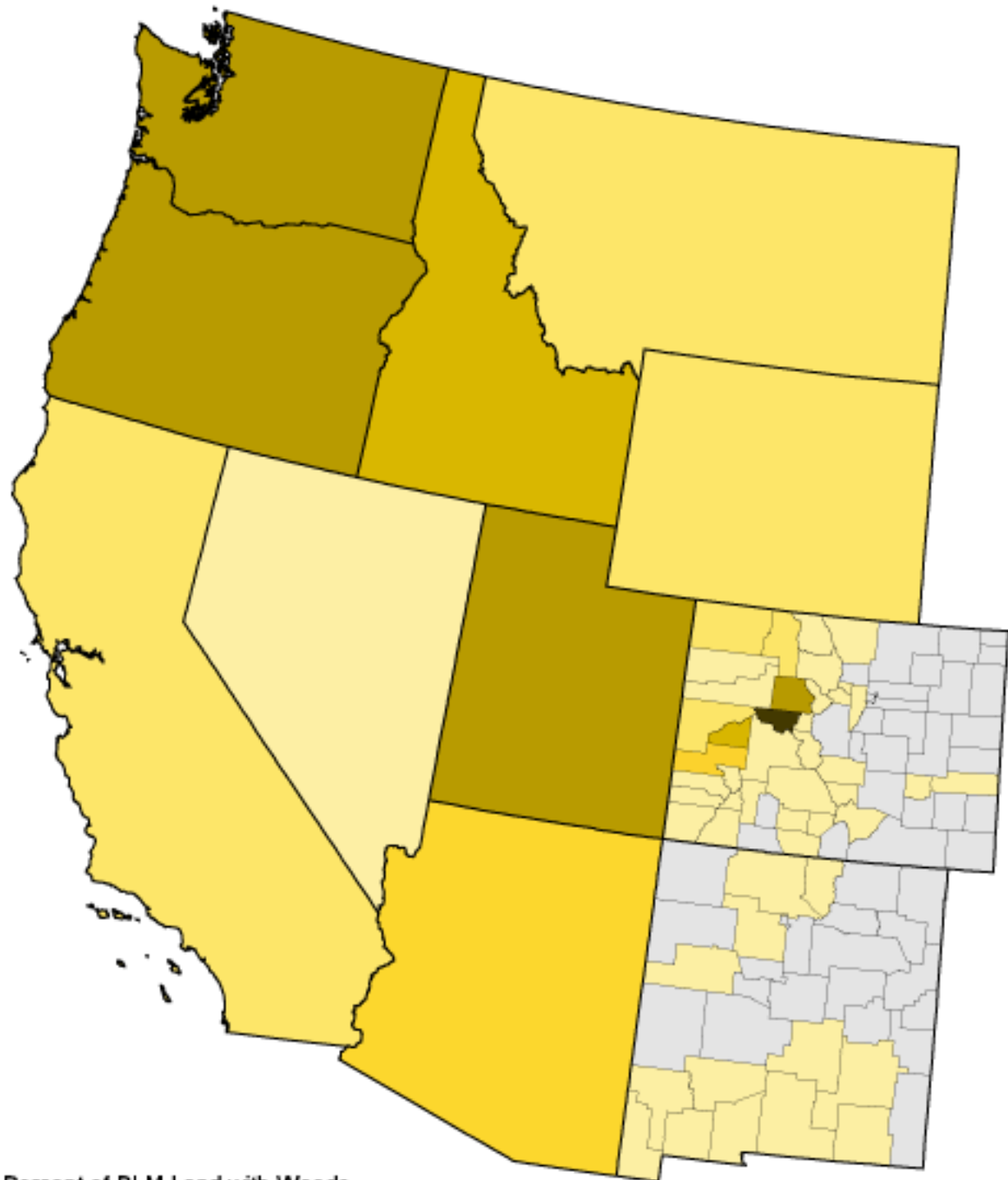
Key Findings: While this map reveals a serious lack of data, it does indicate the severity of the problem by the large number of acres infested. Detailed inventories, if available, would tell us where small, new weed infestations are located. Without this knowledge, the Bureau is blocked from using the most effective weed control technique, which is to find and eradicate new, small infestations of noxious weeds. Even given the caution about using the acreage figures it is clear that the Bureau has a substantial problem with invasive weed species on public lands. At face value, the figures would indicate that about twenty percent (36,126,923 acres) of the public lands in the twelve reporting states have some degree of weed infestation.

Limitations: Cautions that must be considered when viewing the information include the following: about 99.5 percent of the information is based upon gross estimates; estimates can vary greatly from year to year due to climatic changes and associated effects on the abundance of individual weed species; variations exist in interpreting what constitutes an infested acre; and more than one species of weed may occur on the same acreage, which results in over-reporting the total acres infested. Nonetheless, several state weed coordinators have said that some estimates appear to be conservative, and that there are more infested acres than the field offices reported. This is not an indicator for non-plant invasive species.

Source: BLM sent out an Instruction Memorandum in 1997 asking for existing information from previous on-the-ground inventories or any information from Fiscal Year (FY) 1997 inventories. If there were no such inventories, the state weed coordinators were instructed to give an estimate of acres infested with non-native invasive plants (BLM Instruction Memorandum No. 97-130, "Weed Inventory/Mapping in FY 1997.") Many of our field offices are in the process of completing a more accurate inventory of their five - fifteen highest priority weed species.

Comments: Invasive weeds are spreading on BLM lands at an approximate rate of 2,300 acres per day. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that 95 percent of BLM lands are not yet significantly infested. Therefore, it is imperative that the Bureau apply effective and economical strategies immediately to protect those lands from weed infestation.

Weed Distribution



Percent of BLM Land with Weeds
1997



1:12,000,000

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